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Monterey, California



THESIS

SOURCES OF CAREER DISSATISFACTION AMONG
MID-LEVEL COAST GUARD OFFICERS

by

Larry Linton Mizell

June 1983

Thesis Advisor:

Richard A. McGonigal

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Sources of Career Dissatisfaction Among
Mid-Level Coast Guard Officers

by

Larry Linton Mizell
Lieutenant Commander, United States Coast Guard
B.S., Ohio State University, 1971

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 1983

ABSTRACT

This research project was undertaken to identify the major sources of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction prevalent among mid-level officers (O-3 to O-5) in the Coast Guard. Input to this research effort is provided by Coast Guard officers assigned to a wide variety of units located in California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In an era where the Coast Guard is expected to do more and more with less and less, there is a heavy emphasis by the Service to assure the existence of qualified managers. With only 4500 officers the Coast Guard can ill afford to waste even a small percentage of the talent that exists. The Coast Guard places a heavy reliance on its officer corps, for it is they who supply the necessary leadership at every level of operations and management, and who provide the professional, scientific, and technical skills demanded by the numerous mission requirements both ashore and afloat.

Is the Coast Guard demanding too much from its personnel? In a meeting held on January 26, 1981, at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research in Washington, D.C., Admiral John B. Hayes, then Commandant of the Coast Guard, made the following statement:

"The Coast Guard is a multi-mission agency and our equipment and our people are flexible....the average age of our ships is twenty-seven years. A modest goal would be to have a fleet with an average of no more than fifteen years. Our shore facilities are also aging; we have a \$2-3 billion backlog in capital investment there. AND WE ARE SHORT OF PERSONNEL. In a combination with the Office of the Secretary of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget we did a sophisticated zero-based personnel study. This study considered the missions currently assigned to the Coast Guard and the program standards we have developed for current levels of operations. It attempted to discover how many people we would need if we were starting from scratch to build the organization. The net result was that simply to continue our current level of operations without

deterioration of plant and equipment we would need between 9,000 and 15,000 more personnel than we currently have. This estimate suggests the level at which we are now operating--the way we are using up our capital plant and, perhaps, OUR PEOPLE."*

Though it is recognized that the Coast Guard's needs are generated by its mission requirements, it is also necessary to take into account the needs of the individual officer, as well as the needs of the Coast Guard. Individual officers seek opportunities to fulfill their life ambitions and aspirations, to utilize their talents and abilities, and to perform work in accordance with their occupational interests. They also endeavor to follow a career that is compatible with their family needs and expectations.

The complexity of this organization renders it virtually impossible for meeting the needs and expectations of every Coast Guard officer regardless of rank. Officers in the O-3 to O-5 level, however, comprise a critical group. Senior officers depend on their skills and expertise while the junior officers look to them for advice and guidance. This particular group serves as a measuring stick for the entire officer corps.

What then are the most significant concerns of today's mid-level officers - pay, recognition, challenging work, family related concerns? It is not always clear just what

* Hayes, John B. A Conversation With Admiral John B. Hayes. American Enterprise Institute, 1981.

an individual's most important needs are, much less how well they have been satisfied. For example, the pay level for military officers is higher now than at any other time in its history. Many families have dual incomes and with lower level needs largely satisfied, many career officers are in a position to demand satisfaction for their higher level needs. Today's Coast Guard officer is less likely to be satisfied with a job that offers no intrinsic satisfaction. That's not to say they won't live with it. Many officers are willing to tolerate large doses of boredom for that paycheck. But on the whole, sources of job dissatisfaction are probably not strictly a monetary concern. Job content, hours of work, opportunity to interact with peers, varied duties, and degree of job freedom are but a few of the additional areas that may concern officers and influence satisfaction within their careers. In determining satisfaction or dissatisfaction two kinds of perceptions exist - what should be and what actually is. The perception of conditions that should exist is the result of each officer's needs and values, prior job experiences, and the comparison of himself with other officers.

This thesis attempts to isolate the significant factors that contribute to dissatisfaction among lieutenants, lieutenant commanders, and commanders. This study uses a combination of interviews and questionnaires to learn how

important pay and other items such as geographic assignment, quality of subordinates, and job autonomy are in the overall process that leads to the determination of career satisfaction. No attempt is made to study performance reports or the personalities of individuals who were interviewed or responded to questionnaires and then seek a comparison between these variables and career satisfaction. Rather this thesis serves as a tool allowing Coast Guard officers to freely express their ideas concerning those factors that are a source of irritation or distress in their careers.

Through an analysis of interviews and survey data, this thesis seeks to identify the major sources of dissatisfaction that are disturbing the mid-level officer. It is hoped that by addressing this problem, a greater awareness associated with manager dissatisfaction will be realized. In defining those problem areas, it is hoped that the results and insights provided will serve a useful purpose. Indeed, it is the aim of this thesis to assist in the decrease of officer dissatisfaction thus promoting greater satisfaction.

In Chapter II of this thesis there is a review of the literature associated with the topic of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The views of several "experts" will be covered along with a review of pertinent field studies that have been performed. Chapter III provides a look at the methodology utilized in the creation of this research paper.

That section explains the development of the questionnaire and the distribution to the sample population. Chapter IV provides an analysis of the questionnaire and interviews and Chapter V yields the findings and recommendations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

On the subject of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction, behavioral scientists and organization development researchers have developed an enormous amount of theory. The literature review will address several pertinent theories that relate to this thesis topic. This review is divided into four sections: (A) job satisfaction/dissatisfaction theories; (B) previous studies of work satisfaction/dissatisfaction; (C) job vs. need satisfaction; (D) rewards and recognition. A short review of some of the available literature is essential to an understanding of job satisfaction/dissatisfaction causalities.

A. JOB SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION THEORIES

Frederick Taylor in 1911 assumed that job satisfaction was related completely to rewards such as money earned, pension plans, and time off. He emphasized the importance of a worker's attitude in determining his actions on the job. His philosophy of worker attitudes was outlined within his views on scientific management which he saw as being a complete mental revolution on the part of the working man and management who were engaged in any particular establishment or industry. Taylor implicitly assumed that one worker who accepted the scientific management philosophy and who received the highest possible earnings with the least amount of fatigue would be satisfied. [Locke, 1976]

In the late 1950's, Fredrick Herzberg conducted numerous intensive studies of job satisfaction. Following a survey of over 200 accountants and engineers from nine industries around Pittsburgh, he identified the FAE (factors, attitudes, effects) complex. He suggested that job factors, job attitudes, and the effects of these should be studied within each individual. He identified job satisfiers as factors which involve the work itself; achievement, recognition, intrinsic interest in his work, advancement, and responsibility. Man's relation to the environment in which he does his job was considered a job dissatisfier. This category included company and administrative policy, supervision, interpersonal relations, working conditions, and salary. Herzberg suggested that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are two separate entities [Herzberg, 1964]. He emphasized that individual expectations include a need to develop in one's occupation as a source of personal growth and fair treatment in compensation, supervision, and working conditions. [Herzberg, Mausner, Snyderman, 1959]

In more recent studies, Herzberg clarified his concept of motivation-hygiene factors in relation to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. In his theory, Herzberg drew heavily upon the hierarchy of needs developed by Maslow [Maslow, 1954;1969]. The relationship of Herzberg's motivators and Maslow's hierarchy of needs in the job setting is illustrated in Figure 1. Herzberg has stressed

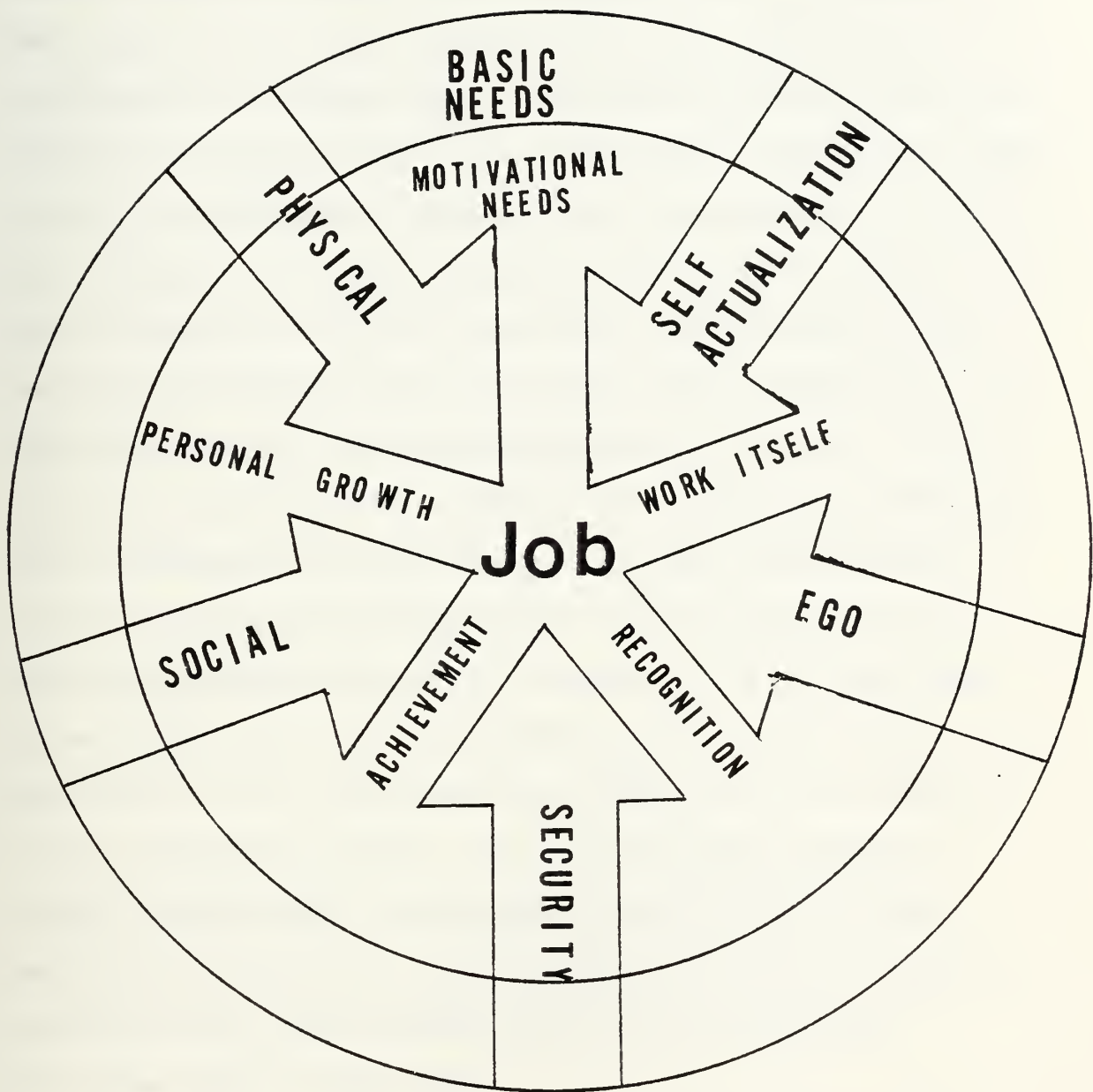


Figure 1. Motivators and Hierarchy of Needs.

that the factors which truly motivate the worker are "growth factors", or those that give the worker a sense of personal accomplishment through the challenge of the job itself. Real motivation is seen as resulting from the worker's involvement in completing an interesting task and from his feeling of accomplishment alone, not from the working conditions or environmental factors that are peripheral to the job. There is a relationship here with Maslow's theory of self-actualization which states that the motivated person receives satisfaction from the sheer love of doing his job. Job dissatisfiers are considered hygiene factors – factors which can and should be prevented. He distinctly identifies job satisfaction as a dichotomous variable rather than a continuous one and suggested that factors involved in producing job satisfaction are separate and distinct from those which lead to job dissatisfaction. Job satisfaction, therefore, is not considered the opposite of job dissatisfaction [Herzberg, 1968]. He utilized this concept in a study of stockholder correspondents and found that the experimental group not only surpassed the control group in production but they also elicited far more positive attitudes toward their jobs.

Robert Saltonstall suggested that many organizations look at human relations from the wrong angle. They often concentrate on what they think would best satisfy the employee instead of asking the worker what he feels would

give him the most satisfaction. This element is responsible for the failure to build and maintain high morale. In his study the workers identified factors which lead to job satisfaction. The four primary factors identified were: (1) doing something worthwhile; (2) trust in leadership; (3) participation; and (4) recognition [Saltonstall, 1953].

Also in the late 1950's a review of the job satisfaction literature performed by Brayfield and Crockett revealed that "there is little evidence in the available literature that employee attitudes bear any simple - or, for that matter, appreciable relationship to performance on the job" [Brayfield and Crockett, 1955]. Herzbert et. al. presented another review of the job satisfaction literature completed at about the same time as Brayfield and Crockett but which took a more optimistic view of the evidence. As cited in Lawler and Porter [1971], the literature review found that...

"there is frequent evidence for the often suggested opinion that positive job attitudes are favorable to increased productivity. The relationship is not absolute, but there is enough data to justify attention to attitudes as a factor in improving the worker's output. However, the correlations obtained in many of the positive studies were low."*

* Lawler, Edward E. and Lyman W. Porter "The Effect of Performance in Job Satisfaction," Fundamentals of Management Selected Readings. Austin: Business Publications, Inc. 1971.

In 1965 Vroom introduced his theory of work motivation. This theory became the foundation for a model that considered multiple factors in the environment and within the worker as interacting to produce levels of performance and of satisfaction. Motivation was defined as a force (a need) that prompted the person to perform particular activity based upon the expectancy that the activity or behavior would be followed by some reward or outcome that had value for the individual. Two levels of outcomes were described in the theory. The first level outcomes were the results of the behavior, that is, performance at a certain level. The first level outcomes were a means (instrumentality) whereby second level outcomes included pay, promotion, and recognition. The effort or energy expended on the behavior was a function of the value (valence) that the individual perceived to be present in the behavior. This behavior would subsequently lead to the securing of second level outcomes or valued rewards [Vroom, 1964].

Lawler and Porter [1967] added further modification factors to Vroom's model. Their study examined the performance of managers and produced a model through which they attempted to describe the factors that determined the effort a person puts into his or her job and which factors affected the relationship between effort and performance. A central determination of the study was that the amount of effort a person expended on the job was a function of the

value of the rewards and the perceived probability or expectancy that the rewards were dependent upon effort to be expended.

The variable labeled effort corresponded to the motivational force identified in the Vroom [1964] model. Effort was distinguished from performance and was combined with two other variables - abilities that included intelligence, skills, personality traits, and role perceptions that were defined as "the kinds of activities and behaviors in which the individual feels he should engage so as to perform his job successfully" [Lawler and Porter, 1967].

Job satisfaction, as mentioned earlier, originally was thought to be a cause of high productivity. A large number of studies have testified to the fact that there is no necessary connection between productivity and satisfaction [Brayfield and Crockett, 1955; Vroom, 1964]. Job satisfaction is viewed primarily as a consequence of job experience and, in fact, high productivity may produce satisfaction as much as the other way around [Smith, 1967].

B. PREVIOUS STUDIES

In a nationwide survey on work satisfaction and dissatisfactions conducted by the Survey Research Center, University of Michigan, Gerald Gurin discovered important distinctions between ego satisfactions and extrinsic satisfactions. Ego satisfactions reflect the extent to

which the job is an expression of some aspect of the self. Ego satisfactions come from the kind of work one does, its interest value, variety, and the skills involved; the opportunities that the job offers for the expression of responsibility, independence, confidence; the potential that it offers for the gratification of interpersonal and friendship needs. Extrinsic satisfactions are those which are concerned with such things as money, job security, and working conditions. Gurin revealed that professional persons are most likely to report ego satisfactions and dissatisfactions, while unskilled workers are more likely to report extrinsic satisfactions [Gurin, 1963].

In a study done in 1963 by Frank Friedlander to investigate the underlying sources of job satisfaction, three underlying groups of job elements were found to be important to job satisfaction: (1) social and technical environment; (2) intrinsic work aspects; and (3) recognition through advancement. Factor I (social and technical environment) encompassed the social and technical aspects of supervision, of the work group, and of the working conditions as a source of satisfaction. Those who derived satisfaction from this factor were described as older, less well paid, and were frequently found in the salaried and supervisory groups. A further analysis indicated there was much less positive relationship between age and salary in this factor than in the other factor groups.

Factor II (intrinsic self-actualizing work aspects): the development and full use of one's capacities was central to most items in this factor. Those who place prime importance on this factor were found more frequently in the younger age groups. Those in younger age groups were more concerned with meaningful work which utilized the best of their abilities and in which they might have a feeling of achievement.

Factor III (recognition through advancement): most items in this factor were concerned with recognizable signs of achievement as a source of job satisfaction. This factor also encompassed the challenging assignments and increased responsibility that generally accompany tangible evidence of recognition, such as increased salary and advancement [Friedlander, 1963].

In a study done in 1963, Porter assessed the extent of perceived deficiencies in need fulfillment as a function of line versus staff type of job [Porter, 1963]. Data were provided from a questionnaire and the nationwide sample of respondents included 1802 managers from a variety of companies. Results showed: (1) line managers perceived greater need fulfillment than staff managers, with the largest line-staff differences occurring in the esteem and self-actualization need areas; (2) line and staff managers did not differ on the importance they attached to each type of need, with the exception of autonomy needs, which line

managers considered more important. Considering all the areas studied, line managers felt they were more satisfied on their jobs than were staff managers.

A study done by Paine, Carroll, and Leete in 1966 compared the need satisfactions of managers in field work with those of similar managers in central office work with a government agency. There was greater satisfaction among those in field work, especially with respect to certain higher level needs. Thus, in the agency studied, field work was somewhat more satisfying than central office work, especially in the self-actualization need category.

A comparison also was made of the need satisfactions of all respondents in the government agency with those of a similar group from private industry. The satisfaction of the government managers was less across all need items than the satisfaction of the private industry managers [Paine, Carroll, Leete, 1966].

Mitchell reported an analysis of differences in need satisfaction for officers in command positions and staff positions. He used data from a survey of 800 commissioned officers in an overseas Air Force command. Significant differences were revealed for rank, between command and staff, and between kinds of staff assignments. Commanders were found to have more fulfillment and less dissatisfaction than staff officers [Mitchell, 1970].

C. JOB VS. NEED SATISFACTION

Robert Schaffer suggested that states of dissatisfaction are aroused when an individual is unable to satisfy certain of his needs. For any individual in any given situation, the amount of tension or dissatisfaction generated, according to Schaffer, is determined by: (1) the strength of his needs or drives, and (2) the extent to which he can perceive and utilize opportunities in the situation for the satisfaction of those needs. Therefore, Schaffer contended that in counseling it would be profitable for management to explore with an employee his needs and to relate his personality to the offerings of an occupation [Schaffer, 1953].

Work was conceived of by Schaffer as potentially satisfying both primary and secondary needs. In his study, Schaffer found that individuals were able to achieve greater accuracy in perceiving the extent to which a given need was satisfied than in estimating the degree of importance which they actually attached to it. Schaffer concluded by stating that the most accurate prediction of over-all job satisfaction could be made from the measure of the extent to which each person's strongest two or three needs were satisfied.

The significance of individual differences in motivational variables for the prediction of job satisfaction has been emphasized by several writers. The rationale commonly associated with such predictions is the need-fulfillment model, which states that job satisfaction is a function of

the degree to which needs are met by the work environment. According to this model, two individuals with different sets of needs, even though working in the same jobs, with similar working conditions and similar compensation, would not necessarily exhibit the same level of job satisfaction [Graen, Dawis, Weiss, 1968].

According to Graen, Dawis, and Weiss, need fulfillment theories of job satisfaction generally assume that individuals differ in the outcomes they prefer (need) to obtain from their jobs. Moreover, these theories hypothesize that the relationship between the outcomes received on the job and satisfaction is dependent upon these preferences (needs) [Graen, Dawis, Weiss, 1968].

M. Scott Myers has provided evidence to suggest that certain support factors such as good working conditions, fringe benefits, and fair practices may reduce dissatisfaction to the extent that individuals will stay with the organization, but that a different group of factors causes managers to be highly motivated toward their work. Myers believed that this latter group, which he called "motivators", includes the factors of achievement, growth, responsibility, and recognition [Myers, 1964].

Research by Porter and Lawler [1968], Hackman and Lawler [1971], and Hackman and Oldham [1976] suggests that an employee's higher order needs are an important factor that influences work motivation and job satisfaction. Porter and

Lawler [1968] emphasize that an individual's degree of higher order need is more closely related to his/her job performance than satisfaction to lower order needs.

Together with Slocum [1971], they claim that their research findings provide support for this general prediction using managerial samples.

D. REWARDS AND RECOGNITION

In 1971 Lawler and Porter outlined a view of job satisfaction that states that people are motivated to do the things which they feel have a high probability of leading to rewards they value. They further described the possibility of the relationship between satisfaction and performance coming about through rewards. Lawler and Porter stated,

"Good performance may lead to rewards, which in turn lead to satisfaction; this formulation then would say that satisfaction, rather than causing performance, as was previously assumed, is caused by it."*

As previously mentioned, the rewards in Porter and Lawler's [1971] model are described as being extrinsic and intrinsic in nature. The extrinsic and intrinsic rewards impact the individual's job through an additional variable: perceived equitable rewards. This variable is described as the amount of rewards that the individual feels he or she

* Lawler, Edward E. and Lyman W. Porter "The Effect of Performance in Job Satisfaction," Fundamentals of Management Selected Readings. Austin: Business Publications, Inc. [1971] p. 115.

should receive as the result of job performance. Figure 2 depicts the relationship described by Porter and Lawler [1971].

In a discussion of the traditional conflict between seniority and performance as bases of reward, Zaleznik and Moment stated that this ageless problem has become intensified in today's organization. The just distribution of rewards in our culture prescribes that seniority, age, and loyal service be rewarded and that competent individual performance also be rewarded. The problem is one of relative weighting; how can seniority be rewarded without simultaneously creating dissatisfaction and disappointment among younger persons whose competences need to be developed and reinforced? A reward to one class of persons may create a relative deprivation for another class. At the same time, individuals change classes over their lives; if the senior members are not valued and rewarded, the younger man, who will become senior in time, may not see much future for himself in staying with the organization. Thus, maintaining equity in the distribution of rewards becomes an increasingly important part of organizational management [Zaleznik, 1964]. According to Lawler, satisfaction with rewards, such as pay, is a function of how much is received, how much others are preceived to receive, and perceptions of what should be received [Lawler, 1981]. Most theories on satisfaction stress that people's feelings of satisfaction are determined

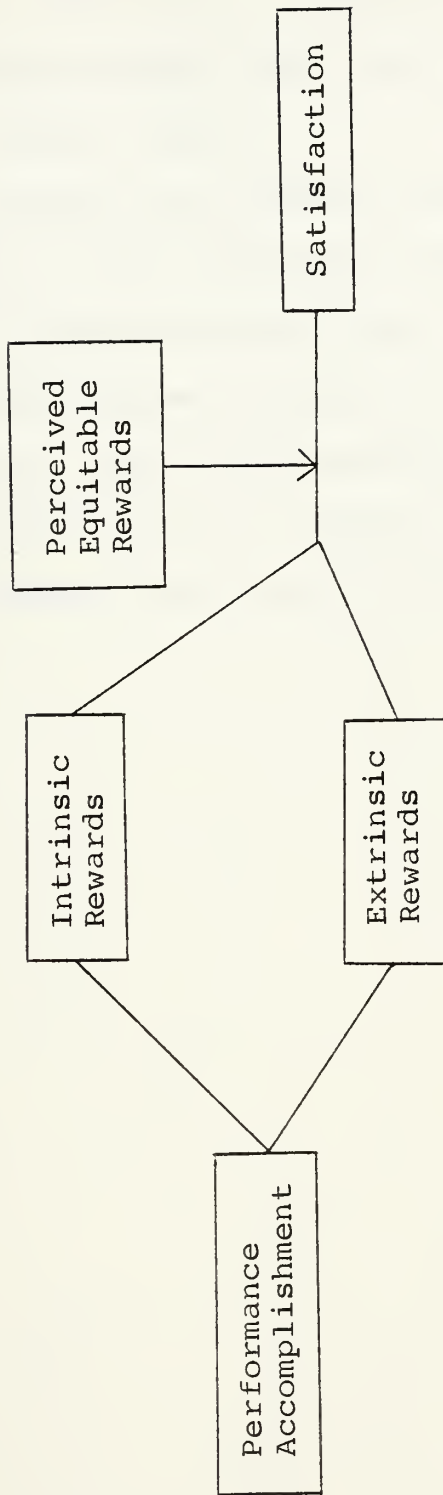


Figure 2. Job Satisfaction Model [Lawler and Porter, 1971].

by a comparison between what they receive, feel they should receive, and would like to receive [Locke, 1976]. Figure 3 shows the three outcomes that can result from this comparison [Lawler, 1981].

Not all rewards are monetary and a great deal of research has been done on what determines whether individuals will be satisfied or dissatisfied with the rewards they receive. Thus, the reward system must deal with organization members as individuals. This means recognizing their individuality and giving them the kind of rewards that they consider worthwhile [Hackman and Suttle, 1977].

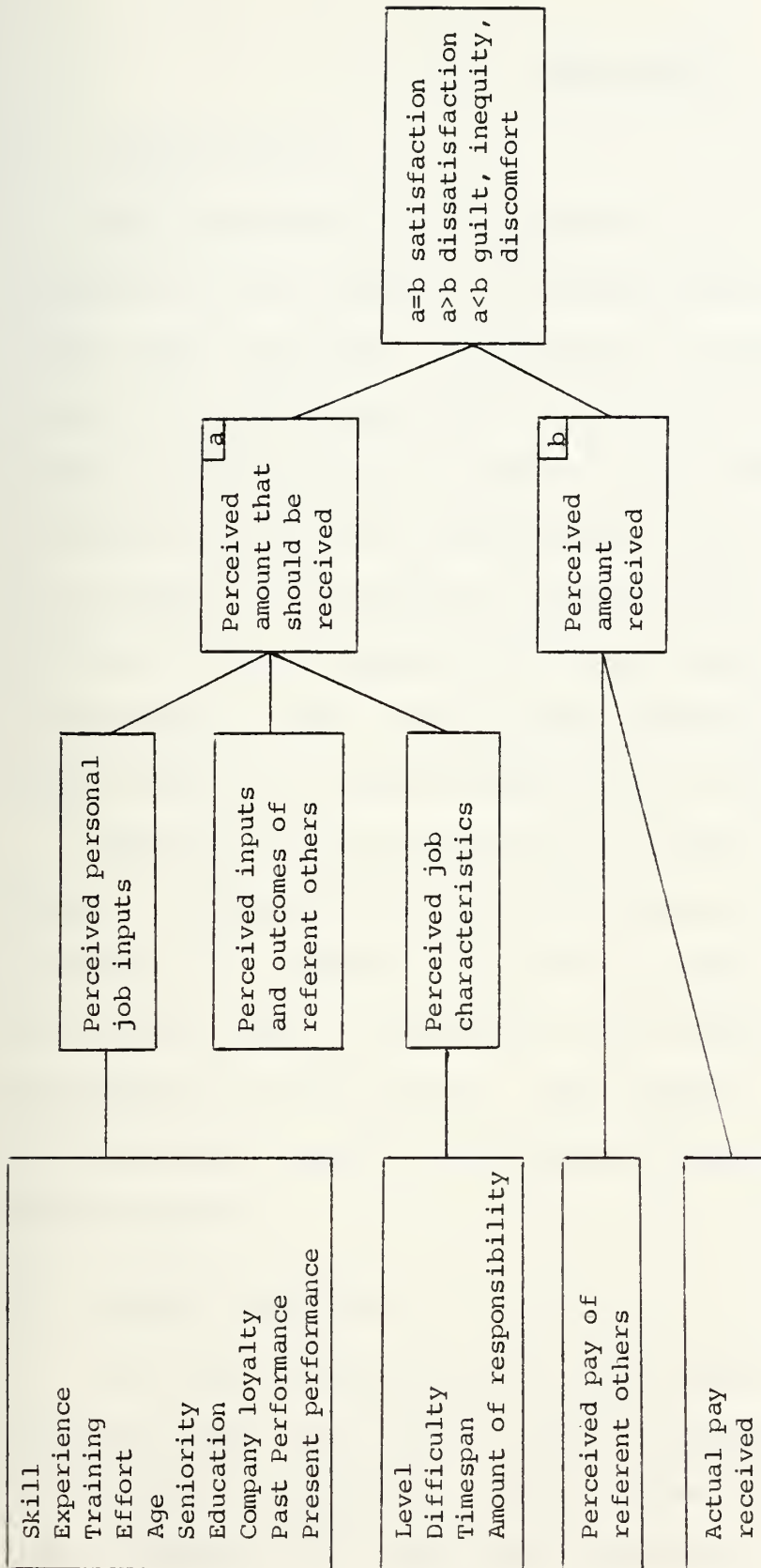


Figure 3. Determinants of Pay Satisfaction [Lawler, 1981].

III. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this research is to identify those factors that are sources of dissatisfaction among mid-level Coast Guard officers. Conversely, another goal of this study is to determine what factors are most positive relative to each officer's career. Some other areas of interest include the officer's satisfaction with his career goals, the effect of the officer's career on his family, and the officer's ideas toward recognition, responsibility, and advancement. Also, ideas toward effectiveness of detailers, supervisors, and subordinates will be addressed.

Research on this project was carried out in two stages. First, a questionnaire was developed and copies were distributed to a sample of mid-level Coast Guard officers. In the second stage, interviews were conducted with random personnel in each district (less Hawaii) in order to substantiate and amplify information obtained from the questionnaire.

B. TARGET POPULATION

The target population includes active duty Coast Guard officers with the ranks of either lieutenant, lieutenant commander, or commander. These three levels constitute approximately 60% of the Coast Guard officer corps. From

this group, a random sample of 205 officers was selected to receive the questionnaire. The officers chosen for the survey were determined by querying the Personnel Management Information System computer files at Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, D.C. Table III-1 shows the number of officers by rank who responded to the questionnaire. A response rate of 80% was achieved. This is perhaps indicative of the tremendous interest that exists concerning the desire for career satisfaction.

TABLE III-1
RESPONDENTS TO QUESTIONNAIRE BY RANK

RANK	FREQUENCY	%
LT	76	46.3
LCDR	53	32.3
CDR	35	21.3

C. QUESTIONNAIRE

A printed questionnaire developed by the author was the primary means of data collection (Appendix A). A thirty-six question questionnaire was mailed to each of the 205 randomly selected officers. The questionnaire was divided into three basic parts. The first part consisted of demographic data in which respondents were asked to provide their rank, sex, age, marital status, and type of unit.

The second section included questions 6 through 35 and provided a large portion of the data. The items addressed included a variety of topics: fringe benefits, promotions, assignments, family concerns, quality of superiors, quality of subordinates, career expectations, career counseling, and recognition.

The final section asked the respondent to identify those factors that he/she considered most important to their career. Respondents were given most of a blank page and were invited to use additional sheets as necessary. Response to this section ranged from a couple of words to a couple of pages.

Pilot questionnaires were tested among Coast Guard students at the Naval Postgraduate School to assess the clarity and understanding of both the questions and the instructions. Since the questionnaire would be distributed to the sample population with no immediate opportunity to ask questions, the pilot questionnaires were administered in the same way. Time for completion of the questionnaire ranged from ten to thirty minutes depending on the time spent responding to the final question. Individuals who took the pilot questionnaires were subsequently interviewed and asked for any necessary clarification or possible ways for improvement.

On 1 February 1983, two hundred and five (205) questionnaires were mailed to Coast Guard officers in California,

Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Far East. Questionnaires were received through 19 April 1983. The response rate was 80%.

D. INTERVIEWS

In order to achieve a cross section of interviewees from various geographic areas, extensive traveling was required. Interviews were conducted in the following locations: Anchorage, AK.; Astoria, OR.; Kodiak, AK.; Long Beach, CA.; San Francisco, CA.; and Seattle, WA. Among those interviewed were personnel attached to various types of units both ashore and afloat.

The purpose of the interviews was to amplify and confirm the information received from the returned questionnaires. Interviews were conducted one on one and each interviewee was assured of confidentiality. The duration of the interviews ranged from fifteen to forty-five minutes each. In general, the following questions were covered in each interview:

1. What are the most rewarding aspects of your career?
2. What are the most frustrating aspects of your career?
3. How do you feel about the recognition that you have received?
4. What are your thoughts on (1) the assignment process, (2) the selection process.
5. How adequate is career counseling among officers?
6. Any strong positive or negative effects on your family?

E. SUMMARY

Data obtained from the questionnaire were coded and fed into the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Data in the form of written comments from the final part of the questionnaire was analyzed separately by the author. This dual combination of data analysis is thought to be the most effective means of correlating and understanding the representative ideas. Appendices A and B provide a breakdown of the questionnaire and the results.

IV. SURVEY ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The author's analysis is centered on issues that are important to every Coast Guard officer. The factors that provide career satisfaction and the sources of job dissatisfaction can only be addressed when they have been identified.

In this regard, a wide scope of topics have been addressed. Choice of responses to the survey questions do not follow a rigid pattern. Rather, each is tailored to the individual question. Neutral responses are considered to be non-positive. The reason for this is to clearly show the dichotomy that exists between those who clearly state their agreement and those who are not in agreement.

Much of the information provided in this analysis was derived from interview data and written comments from the questionnaire. Appendix B provides a detailed summary of the questionnaire results for all the questions broken down by rank.

A. BREAKDOWN OF FACTORS CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT IN ACHIEVING CAREER SATISFACTION

The combination of interviews and questionnaires yielded a total of thirty-five different factors in achieving career satisfaction among mid-level officers. Appendix C provides a listing of the various responses. Listed below are the

ten most commonly mentioned factors ranked in descending order with recognition being the most popular factor. -

TABLE IV-1
FACTORS IN JOB SATISFACTION

<u>FACTORS</u>	<u>FREQUENCY</u>
Recognition	(52)
Job Challenge	(44)
Job Location	(32)
Sense of Accomplishment	(31)
Meaningful Job	(31)
Promotion	(29)
Good Leadership and Effective Superiors	(27)
Job Freedom	(27)
Family Happiness	(25)
Pay	(24)

Each of these factors will be addressed individually using data from the personal interviews, various comments provided in the questionnaire, and the questionnaire itself.

1. Recognition

A desire for recognition ranked far above any other factor as the most important factor for job satisfaction. Recognition in the form of advancement carried the most weight. Many of the thoughts on recognition, however,

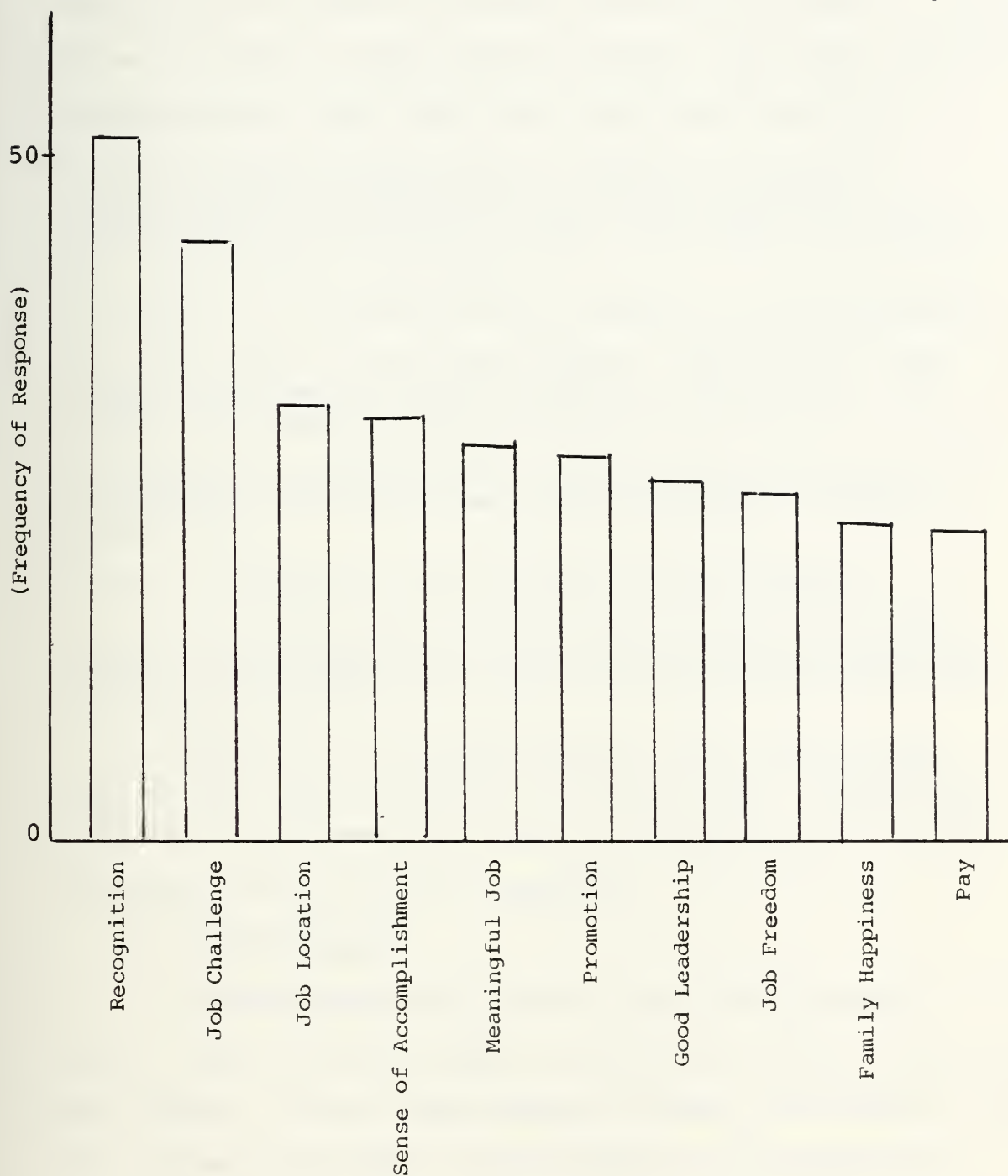


Figure 4. Factors of Job Satisfaction.

concerned positive feedback from superiors. Most are not concerned with receiving medals and awards, rather, a simple pat on the back or some positive stroke from their superiors is considered a key element for career satisfaction.

"I'm not really interested in medals but something easier like a telephone call from the Chief of Operations or the Chief of Staff following my efforts in a significant operation".....

"I want to be recognized and treated as a professional".....

"I don't give a damn about medals, just give me some appreciation when I bust by tail in completing a job above and beyond the call of duty".....

"Recognize me for my work. Not only the often conceived obligatory end of tour award but on a more routine basis".....

"Give me recognition in the form of advancement".....

"I have a strong need for favorable feedback from the public and my superiors that my efforts are recognized and appreciated".....

In looking at the questionnaire, only 50% of those surveyed feel that the amount of recognition received is adequate. The commanders gave the highest marks with 50% indicating recognition was adequate.

2. Job Challenge

A challenging job was the second most popular factor. Most officers appear content with the job challenge that exists. In the questionnaire, almost 90% reported that their career was either challenging or very challenging.

"I want a job that challenges me, but is also attainable".....

"I'm being challenged but in the wrong way. Our entire organization is being over burdened by reports and paperwork. Challenging does not necessarily mean rewarding".....

"Aviators are notorious for assigning very menial and unchallenging collateral duties to their pilots".....

3. Job Location

Response to question (15) concerning which factor is most important, billet type or location, was fairly well distributed - location (25%), job (25%), both equally important (50%). However, comments relative to the subject definitely favor job location as the more important factor. This factor ranks as the third most important factor in career satisfaction from the sample population.

"We've enjoyed every area we've lived in but hate the move itself, especially giving up friends, home, kids in and out of schools, and the money lost in selling/buying homes. My largest complaint is the lack of an ability to guarantee our own geographic location".....

"If such a policy existed, I would consider dropping out of the line of promotion in order to stay in a particular geographic location".....

"I would strongly support a system of keeping your assignment in a general geographic area. I take a financial bath every time I relocate".....

Most of the comments reflect a feeling of contentment with geographic location. This is further supported by the response to question 12 (satisfaction with geographic location). Clearly, 86% of the sample population indicated satisfaction. However, only 45% felt any ability to influence their geographic area of assignment (question 13). There is an interesting twist here. The commanders surveyed

were the most satisfied with 95% indicating satisfaction. Ironically, with the "Command Selection Boards" now in existence, it is probably more difficult to influence one's assignment than with an individual assignment officer.

4. Sense of Accomplishment

A sense of accomplishment on the job was the fourth most important concern. Many felt that the job itself was the key, with some jobs more conducive to attaining accomplishment than others.

"In any job, some sense of accomplishment is important to me. Of course, this is somewhat governed by your "mindset" i.e. being in a job where you feel you are doing something that makes a difference".....

"The key factor for me is very real, lasting accomplishments. Sometimes this is difficult in our organization given the bureaucracy and the occasional incompetant above you who can undo everything".....

"Without exception, the Coast Guard offers the best opportunity for accomplishing something really worthwhile that can be found in any career that I know".....

"I have been frustrated at times by having too short a time to really accomplish anything significant in my job - usually due to ultra-fast changes".....

"More than once I have put many hours into a project and felt very satisfied with the end product only to see bosses change and the new boss, who has different priorities, pigeon hole or completely can the whole thing. It's very frustrating at times".....

The table below reflects the strong feelings of accomplishment that exist among those surveyed:

TABLE IV-2

FEELINGS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Positive	9	19	17	65	39.6
Positive	36	29	15	80	48.8
Borderline	9	3	3	15	9.1
Negative	2	1	0	3	1.8
Very Negative	0	1	0	1	.6

(See Figure 5)

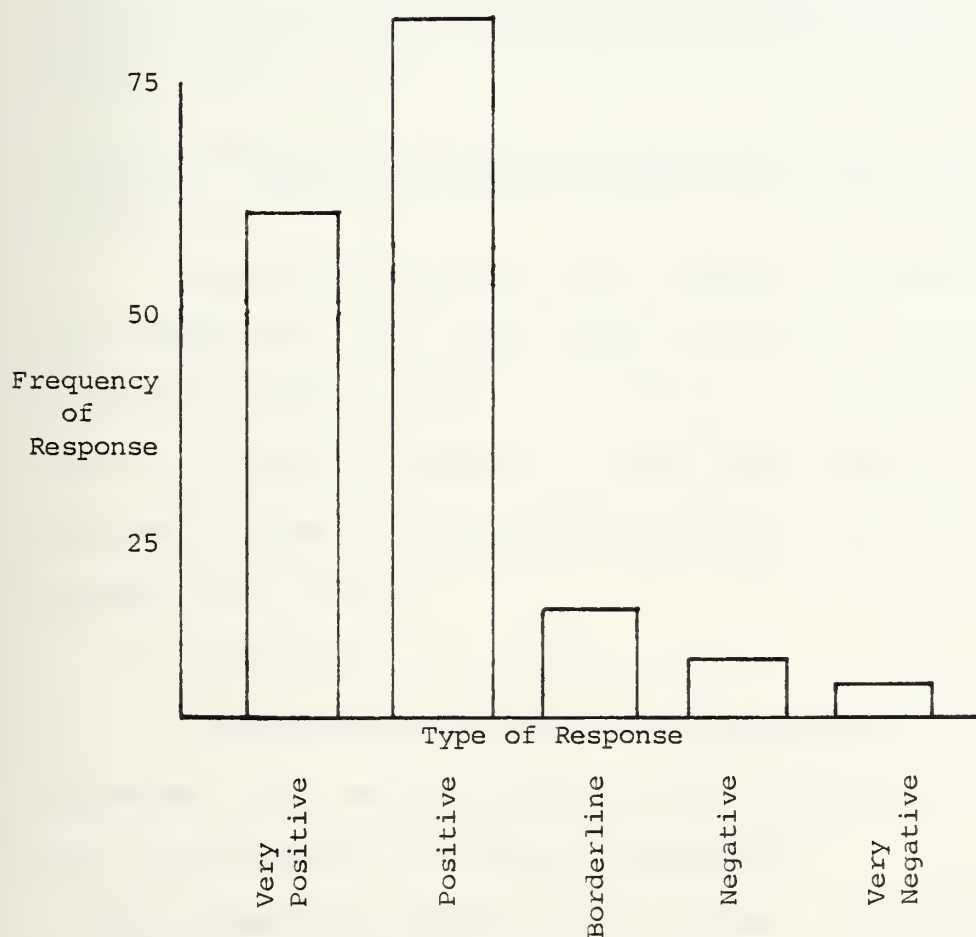


Figure 5. Feelings of Accomplishment (All Ranks Combined).

5. Meaningful Job

This factor is considered most important by many officers. The Coast Guard mission, individual aspirations, and a sense of humanitarianism are reflected in this category.

"I want to be involved in a job that needs to be done, not just a warm body filling a billet".....

I want to do something meaningful and worthwhile - to promote the effectiveness of the Coast Guard in the long run, not simply for short term personal gain".....

"People must personally care for what they do. Many feel stepped-on and as a result get little return satisfaction".....

"For me, a big part of my job satisfaction is just being part of the Coast Guard and the humanitarian missions for which we stand. I wouldn't say that if I was Army, Navy, etc.".....

"I'm always looking for a responsible job - not just a billet. There are too many positions where we must make work".....

Reflecting on the many comments concerning the idea of a meaningful job, there appears to be a tremendous amount of genuine concern for the job that is performed. Not only are the officers looking for individual satisfaction, there is also a sense of determination toward improving and helping society as a whole.

6. Promotion

Comments on the promotion system were widely dispersed from very positive to very negative. The up or out policy appears to be very unpopular.

"The promotion process is too vague. Different boards emphasize different things".....

"The up or out system causes dissatisfaction and stress for those who are happy where they are".....

"Let's be realistic! There's too much emphasis on cadet/O.C. final standing".....

"We need more feedback as to standards of promotion".....

"My biggest complaint is that often people are promoted/assigned according to who they know rather than what they know".....

"I am dissatisfied with the slow down in promotions. There should be a way in the system to promote more rapidly the young energetic "hotrunner". There isn't enough deep selection to make it a genuine motivating force".....

"Officers have been going down hill. It appears that the person who "doesn't do anything" never does anything wrong and gets promoted".....

"Where is the incentive when people who are not performing at the same level as me are getting promoted just as quickly".....

"I really didn't want to become a LCDR. The jobs open to this rank are generally lackey, BS, staff puke jobs which are a real pain. I wanted to remain a LT".....

From the sample population, only 44% responded in a positive way concerning the selection/promotion process. The lieutenants responded in the least positive manner with 34% answering positive or very positive. The table below shows the breakout by rank:

TABLE IV-3

SELECTION/PROMOTION PROCESS RESPONSES

	Positive-Very Positive
LT	34%
LCDR	55%
CDR	49%
Overall	44%

7. Good Leadership and Effective Superiors

This item ranked seventh as most important. Most of those commenting admitted working for what they considered both good and poor superiors. Most of the comments were toward the negative aspect.

"Too many superiors are afraid to take any risks in standing up for their beliefs. We need more strong leaders and fewer meek managers".....

"Only a few superiors have really turned me off. They were extremely poor leaders, insensitive to their personnel, and possessed a tremendous ego that had to be taken care of before anything else".....

"I would like to say that the importance of interpersonal relations with superiors needs to be stressed as a powerful force in job satisfaction. I have witnessed much tension and dissatisfaction among officers by a lack of good, supportive leadership. Trust and confidence are important factors in the superior-subordinate relationship".....

While most of the comments seemed to dwell on the negative aspects, the response to question 28 (quality of superiors) resulted in 70% of the sample population evaluating their superiors either good or exceptionally good.

8. Job Freedom

This factor was ranked number eight overall but for many officers this was very critical with respect to attaining job satisfaction. The general feeling was that this factor spelled the difference between merely existing in a job and being able to perform independent worthwhile tasks.

"I want the freedom to do a job on my own without interference or restrictions from above, below, outside, etc.".....

"I enjoy being allowed to do the job I was assigned to do without constantly being questioned and queried as to why I take a particular course of action".....

"I want and enjoy the freedom to make decisions on assigned projects without referral two or three "rungs" up the chain of command".....

"I can think freely and propose freely but it's a bear to get things implemented without money".....

"Allow me to do the job to which assigned within the normal general framework of regulations, directives, etc. - without being knit-picked continuously".....

The survey indicates that the majority of mid-level officers have job freedom. In responding to question 29 (job freedom given in the performance of their job), 87% evaluated this factor as either adequate or very adequate.

TABLE IV-4
DEGREE OF JOB FREEDOM BY RANK

	<u>LT</u>		<u>LCDR</u>		<u>CDR</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%	(N)	%
Very Adequate	27	36	24	45	23	65	74	45.1
Adequate	36	47	24	45	8	23	68	41.5
Borderline	10	13	3	6	3	9	16	9.8
Inadequate	3	4	2	4	1	3	6	3.7
Very Inadequate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

(Observation: Higher Rank Reflects Greater Job Freedom)

9. Family Happiness

Numerous officers indicated that career satisfaction has decreased because their family has become less supportive toward moves. As the family develops "roots", there is pressure to remain in an area at all costs. Keeping the family happy was recognized by many as taking precedence over their career aspirations.

"My largest detriment to career satisfaction is the lack of stability in my wife's career".....

"My family's involvement in the community is just as important as my career".....

"My wife and I are both tired of moving every three to five years. We are very active in the civilian community and feel like each time we move we have to start over".....

"With a child now in high school, any moves are assuming a very negative effect".....

It is interesting to compare the results of question 14 (family attitude toward moving) with question 18 (family attitude toward career). Approximately 70% of the families are said to have a positive attitude toward the career of their spouse/parent. However, only 37% exhibit a positive attitude toward moving. There is no significant difference between the three ranks surveyed relative to this question.

10. Pay

Pay was less of a concern than was anticipated. Though the topic of pay was frequently mentioned, the one recurring comment heard was a concern for the ability to

maintain military pay and benefits comparable to civilian counterparts. At the present level, most officers appear to consider their level of pay as adequate. Eighty percent of the sample population indicated in question (6) on the questionnaire that they were satisfied with their pay level.

A summary of those factors identified as sources of job satisfaction seems to indicate a wide variety of very important concerns. The two most frequently identified factors, recognition and job challenge, clearly exceeded the other factors. I tend to agree with the sample population relative to the ranking of the factors, but, I think the reasons for this ranking are less than obvious and need to be stressed. In addressing recognition and job challenge, most of the comments and statements appear to reflect a feeling of what one expects versus what really exists. I think mid-level officers expect to receive recognition, expect a challenge, and this in turn constitutes satisfaction. Regardless, it is my observation that most mid-level officers are fairly well satisfied with their jobs and have established a balance in the environment between what they expect and what they hope to obtain.

B. SOURCES OF DISSATISFACTION

With many of the basic needs largely satisfied, the sample population has identified some higher level needs that concern them. Appendix D provides a ranking of

1. Lack of Recognition

In looking at potential sources of dissatisfaction, the lack of recognition ranks as one of the most serious. This factor was evaluated as the most important concern among the sample population in achieving career satisfaction. However, as shown in Appendix D, only about 50% of the respondents indicate a favorable response toward the amount of recognition received. (Table IV-5)

TABLE IV-5
AMOUNT OF RECOGNITION RECEIVED

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	Total (N)	(%)
Very Adequate	6	6	6	18	11.0
Adequate	32	20	13	65	39.6
Borderline	17	11	9	37	22.6
Inadequate	14	13	4	31	18.9
Very Inadequate	7	3	3	13	7.9

While recognition may serve as a source of satisfaction for many, conversely, the lack of recognition acts as a source of dissatisfaction for others. Somewhat surprising is the fact that MSO personnel reflect the most favorable marks toward recognition with 74% responding that recognition is either adequate or very adequate. Group/Station personnel, on the other hand, indicate that only 40% of the

questions by positive response percentage. In spite of the extremely high satisfaction in certain areas, one-third of the questoins reflect responses of borderline to total dissatisfaction by at least one-half of the officers. Failure to recognize these concerns may be detrimental to the overall attainment of job satisfaction.

It's interesting that the sources of dissatisfaction consist of a combination of motivating factors (i.e. recognition) and hygiene factors (i.e. supervisors and transfers). Despite Herzberg's theory that hygiene factors do not lead to job satisfaction but merely to the absence of dissatisfaction, such is not the case in this study. The quality of the supervisors serves as a source of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction by the sample population.

But dissatisfaction can be caused as much by low income, inadequate fringe benefits, and job insecurity. Indeed, it is my observation that lack of recognition and poor leadership are much less oppressive than lack of income. As the results of the questionnaire indicate, however, pay for the mid-level officer is perceived as adequate by most and is therefore absent from the list of dissatisfaction sources. The evidence suggests that the officers are in fact satisfied with many of their lower level needs. There is no reason then to ignore those factors that have been clearly identified. The fact that these factors are presently of greater concern than other factors is itself significant.

sample feels that the amount of recognition is either adequate or very adequate.

2. Frequent Transfers/Relocation

The issue of frequent transfers was clearly identified as a source of dissatisfaction. As noted previously, 86% of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their geographic location. However, only 45% felt they had a realistic chance of influencing their location. Few officers indicated pleasure in relocating.

"Keep me here forever".....

"My largest complaint is the lack of our ability to maintain more stability in our geographic location. If I could stay in one place longer, I would stay in the Coast Guard permanently".....

"I plan to retire this summer after nine years service. My reason is a strong dislike for this gypsy existence of frequent transfers".....

The concern expressed by the majority of officers was not so much where they were located, rather, the concern was more for tour length and a desire to remain in one geographic area for more than one tour. Personal and family involvement in the community, children in school, and housing concerns were most often cited as reasons for opposition to relocation.

3. Poor Quality of Leadership/Supervisors

Poor leadership and ineffective bosses were identified as a major source of dissatisfaction by the sample population. Trust and confidence in their superiors

is considered crucial and failure to recognize those qualities will likely produce a very negative effect. The following comments are indicative of the concern that was felt:

"One of the most discouraging things I've had to endure in my career is low quality people in positions of authority".....

"My last CO exhibited very poor leadership and provided me with little or no support. I was given little guidance and eventually lost all initiative to produce".....

"My compatibility with my CO or direct superior greatly determines the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction that I experience in the Coast Guard".....

The sample indicated that 70% were positive toward superiors. (Table IV-6)

TABLE IV-6
QUALITY OF SUPERIOR

	Positive Response
LT	63%
LCDR	72%
CDR	83%
Overall	70%

C. AREAS OF CONCERN

While not identified by the sample population as a major source of either satisfaction or dissatisfaction, I think each of these areas has the potential of causing serious job dissatisfaction. Poor or insensitive treatment from a detailer, total job burnout, or inadequate career guidance

can create consequences for an officer that may take years to overcome. In some ways, these factors can have a longer lasting effect than the more common factors mentioned. Job burnout, for example, can have a profound effect on recognition, job challenge, or a sense of accomplishment. Poor or inadequate career guidance can severely effect any officer's career expectations. Despite their ranking in the questionnaire, these factors are considered very important and should not be taken lightly.

1. Satisfaction with Career Guidance/Career Counseling

There are no professional or assigned career counselors in the Coast Guard for the officer corps. At each unit, the responsibility of providing career counseling to officers falls to the senior officers of that unit. When the respondents were asked if they had ever been given career counseling, there was a significant difference noted with respect to the commanders. The table below reflects the overall effectiveness of career counseling in general among the sample population.

TABLE IV-7

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN GIVEN CAREER COUNSELING?

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>
YES	35%	32%	14%
NO	65%	68%	86%
(N)	76	53	35

(Appendix A and B, Question 34)

Of the respondents who stated that they had received career counseling, most indicated they had to seek it through their own initiative. Competition among officers was frequently stated as a reason for the severe lack of counseling.

2. Job Burnout

Job burnout is also a concern among the mid-level officers. About 60% of the sample population has experienced burnout at some point during their career. The policy of extending tour lengths in some jobs may further add to this problem. Burnout among the sample population is significantly higher for air stations and larger cutters than for any other type of unit. Overall, units afloat show a slightly higher burnout rate than do those ashore. (Table IV-8)

The following comments were typical:

"XO of a WHEC is the worst job in the Coast Guard. A hundred and eighty people placing demands on time, all with problems of a similar nature".....

"For a period of several months in my present assignment, the workload was quite heavy and I had little free time for anything else but eating and sleeping in order to meet job commitments".....

"I have had two 4-year staff jobs in my career. Though both jobs were initially interesting and challenging, by the fourth year repetition, long term frustrations, and the lack of anything more to offer led to stagnation".....

"As CO of a major shore unit and as XO of a WHEC, I've experienced burnout. I grow weary of straightening out the mess other people have left behind, and I get tired of teaching the basics to my underlings. Just once I'd like to have a unit with some of the people beyond their first enlistment, or on a second tour in that class of ship".....

TABLE IV-8

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED A SENSE OF JOB BURNOUT?

	<u>% Burnout</u>
High Endurance Cutter (WHEC)	75
Medium Endurance Cutter (WMEC)	71.4
Buoy Tender (WLB)	66.7
Other Afloat	33.3
Air Station	71.8
Other Ashore	59.3
MSO	52.2
District	52.1
Group/Station	40.0

"I joined the Coast Guard to be a pilot and worked very hard to be the best. I find, however, that nobody is interested in flying abilities. I have little or no interest in paper work".....

3. Equitable Assignment Process

When the respondents were asked if the assignment process is equitable in all career fields, their answers were very negative. Only 13% of the sample population felt that the assignment process was equitable. There is no accurate way of determining the actual answer to this question but the perception among the officers is obviously negative. The following comments exemplify many of the ideas expressed:

"We ask for trouble every we continue to promote the "all around officer". With the multitude of statutes we are now responsible for we must specialize more".....

"We pay lip service to developing non-operations specialists (finance, personnel, computers, etc.) but in recent promotion boards, those with ship or aviation "ticket punches" have done much better than specialists. If you don't rotate out of the field, you don't get promoted".....

"There is a perception of "professional staff officers" having an advantage over "O" types since there is less opportunity to make a mistake".....

4. Detailers

In spite of numerous derogatory comments about their respective detailers, 60% of the sample population evaluated their treatment from the detailers as either somewhat good or exceptionally good. The commanders were the most favorable with 71% positive toward detailers while lieutenants ranked least positive with 53% showing a positive attitude toward the detailers. With respect to the units, 71% of those assigned to jobs afloat were positive while units ashore responded with 57% as positive. Many of the respondents qualified their answers indicating that their ideas concerning the detailers had changed one way or the other during their career.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to identify sources of dissatisfaction among mid-level officers in the Coast Guard. Likewise, the study examined some of the factors that provide a significant contribution to job satisfaction. To some degree, the study has further identified certain seemingly low concern elements within the Coast Guard that can potentially result in significant consequences for an officer.

The surprisingly strong concern for recognition and the lack thereof demonstrates a strong need for positive feedback when deserved by most officers. The results of the analysis suggest that recognition may take the form of positive feedback through a quality fitness report. Paramount to most officers, however, was simply some form of verbal or written compliment for a job well done. Perhaps, as an organization, some of the personal touch in recognizing professional excellence is lost within our own ranks.

Basically, the analysis suggests which significant factors exist but really doesn't explain how they evolved. By virtue of the survey data which provided the foundation for the analysis, a ranking of significant factors was developed. Many of those factors that were identified - job

challenge, job location, sense of accomplishment, etc. - are dependent on situational variables of the individual officer that cannot be separated from individual personality variables. For example, if an officer places a high value on interaction with his peers and the military work environment allows this interaction, it will have a significant effect on the officer's level of job satisfaction.

Conversely, if a high value is placed on this interaction with peers and the opportunity to do so is not present, dissatisfaction will likely result. Still, a third possibility is that the opportunity to interact may be present but the individual officer does not place any particular value on this situational variable. Thus, even though it is present, it will have little effect on job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The point is that different officers have different needs based on their own environment.

The degree of pessimism expressed by many of the respondents toward transfers raises serious doubt about their ability to avoid job dissatisfaction with the normal mobility that is prevalent in the military lifestyle. While back to back tours are indeed reasonable and cost effective, to expect anything beyond this is unrealistic and probably quite rare. As an organization, the Coast Guard probably has the most liberal transfer policy of all the other services with respect to length of tour.

There were numerous written comments and verbal responses surrounding the subject of detailers. As the survey shows, sixty percent of the sample population gave a positive response toward treatment from their detailers. While some may consider this as an optimistic sign, it should be taken with due caution to the extent that forty percent is a significant number on the less than positive side of the curve.

B. AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The issue of how to deal with those significant factors which are causing dissatisfaction is complex and this study only identifies them. It does not resolve the problem. A thorough examination of those factors could constitute the basis for an entirely separate thesis. Additionally, the following recommendations are proposed for further study relative to job satisfaction/dissatisfaction:

1. This thesis dealt strictly with mid-level Coast Guard officers. A similar study with enlisted personnel and a comparison of the two could be very valuable.
2. Though the Coast Guard is much smaller than the other military services, a replication of this study by them could provide some worthwhile contrasts and comparisons.
3. Officers from all career paths were utilized in this study. For future studies, research in a more specific area such as surface officer versus flight officer is recommended.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

While the majority of officers are fairly satisfied with their Coast Guard career, there is much room for improvement. In order to enhance future career aspirations and needs, this researcher recommends the following actions:

1. As a superior, be sensitive to the needs of your subordinates. Provide feedback as often as possible, either positive or negative. Be lavish in your praise when an individual is deserving of it. Feedback in the form of a compliment is often a very adequate and effective gesture. When dealing with your junior officers, seek them out if you believe they're in need of career counseling.
2. Detailers are busy individuals and often work under constraints beyond their control. Try to visualize your personal situation from their perspective. If you're greatly concerned about your assignment, don't wait for them to call you, CALL THEM. An open line of communication will do wonders for your peace of mind. Criticizing detailers after assignments are made does little to enhance your satisfaction in the long run.
3. As an officer in the Coast Guard, expect to relocate every one or two tours. While families are a large consideration, explain to them the needs of the service and condition them for the change.

4. Finally, most individuals we are dealing with in the Coast Guard are intelligent, rational people who have good intentions. Occasionally, sources of job dissatisfaction can be addressed by simply making the proper officer aware of specific problem areas like those addressed in this study. A lack of awareness toward individual needs (i.e. recognition) can often be rectified by communicating openly with the appropriate individual.

APPENDIX A

O-3 TO O-5 CAREER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Fellow Coast Guard Officer:

Thank you for taking the time to read this. The enclosed survey has been sent to you along with 250 randomly selected officers in the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 17th Coast Guard Districts.

I am studying those factors that contribute most significantly to a lack of career contentment. Information obtained and developed will be used strictly for research purposes (i.e. my thesis).

Your responses are an essential portion of this project at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, and only your cooperation can make this beneficial to the Coast Guard. All responses to this questionnaire will be held in strictest confidence.

Your cooperation in answering the attached questions candidly is requested. Any additional comments are welcomed and encouraged. When responding to the questionnaire, please base your answers relative to your entire Coast Guard career, not just your present assignment.

Please return the completed questionnaire as soon as possible and no later than 31 March. I sincerely appreciate your effort and hope that your present tour is a rewarding one.

L. L. MIZELL, LCDR, USCG

INSTRUCTIONS:

- (1) Use pen or pencil
- (2) Please place an "X" on the line that corresponds to your response.
- (3) If you have additional comments, please feel free to write them directly on the survey form in the open margins.
- (4) If possible, please complete the questionnaire in one sitting. It should take about 10-20 minutes.
- (5) When you are finished, please return the completed survey form in the envelope provided.

BACKGROUND

(1) What is your rank?

_____ LT

_____ LCDR

_____ CDR

(2) What is your age?

_____ 25-30

_____ 31-35

_____ 36-40

_____ Over 40

(3) Please indicate your sex.

_____ Male

_____ Female

(4) What is your marital status?

_____ Single

_____ Married

_____ Divorced

_____ Other (separated, widowed)

(5) What type of unit is your present duty station?

ASHORE

AFLOAT

_____ District

_____ HEC

_____ Group/Station

_____ MEC

_____ Marine Safety

_____ WLB

_____ Air Station

_____ Other (Specify)

_____ Other (Specify)

(6) How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your pay level?

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Borderline

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

(7) What is your overall reaction toward the adequacy of the present military retirement plan?

_____ Very Adequate

_____ Adequate

_____ Borderline

_____ Inadequate

_____ Very Inadequate

(8) How would you rate military benefits overall?

- _____ Very Adequate
- _____ Adequate
- _____ Borderline
- _____ Inadequate
- _____ Very Inadequate

(9) In general, how do you feel about how quickly officers are being promoted?

- _____ Much too quickly
- _____ Too quickly
- _____ Just right
- _____ Too slowly
- _____ Much too slowly

(10) What is your reaction to the overall selection process for officer promotion?

- _____ Very Positive
- _____ Positive
- _____ Borderline
- _____ Negative
- _____ Very Negative

- (11) The assignment process is equitable in all career fields for Coast Guard officers.

_____ Strongly Agree
_____ Agree
_____ Neutral
_____ Disagree
_____ Strongly Disagree

- (12) To what extent have you been satisfied with the geographic area of your assignment?

_____ Very Satisfied
_____ Satisfied
_____ Borderline
_____ Dissatisfied
_____ Very Dissatisfied

- (13) How would you evaluate your ability to influence the selection of geographic area of your assignment?

_____ Exceptionally Good
_____ Somewhat Good
_____ So-so
_____ Somewhat Poor
_____ Exceptionally Poor

(14) What has been the attitude of your family toward your frequency of moves in the Coast Guard?

_____ Very Positive

_____ Positive

_____ Borderline

_____ Negative

_____ Very Negative

_____ Not Applicable

(15) When being assigned, what factor is most important to you, billet type or billet location?

_____ Billet Type

_____ Billet Location

_____ Both Equally Important

(16) With an impending transfer, I am normally given adequate notification prior to my departure for a new duty station.

_____ Strongly Agree

_____ Agree

_____ Neutral

_____ Disagree

_____ Strongly Disagree

(17) How would you describe the quality of subordinates that you have encountered during your career?

_____ Exceptionally Good

_____ Somewhat Good

_____ So-so

_____ Somewhat Poor

_____ Exceptionally Poor

(18) What has been the attitude of your family toward your Coast Guard career?

_____ Very Positive

_____ Positive

_____ Borderline

_____ Negative

_____ Very Negative

_____ Not Applicable

(19) The public recognizes and genuinely appreciates the Coast Guard's mission?

_____ Strongly Agree

_____ Agree

_____ Neutral

_____ Disagree

_____ Strongly Disagree

(20) Most of the billets during my career have been -

- _____ Very Challenging
- _____ Challenging
- _____ Borderline
- _____ Unchallenging
- _____ Very Unchallenging

(21) How would you describe the treatment that you have personally received from your detailer?

- _____ Exceptionally Good
- _____ Somewhat Good
- _____ So-so
- _____ Somewhat Poor
- _____ Exceptionally Poor

(22) In general, to what extent have you been satisfied with the billet assignments during your career?

- _____ Very Satisfied
- _____ Satisfied
- _____ Borderline
- _____ Dissatisfied
- _____ Very Dissatisfied

- (23) How would you evaluate your ability toward influencing your particular billet assignment?
- _____ Exceptionally Good
- _____ Somewhat Good
- _____ So-so
- _____ Somewhat Poor
- _____ Exceptionally Poor
- (24) How would you evaluate your qualifications overall for the billet assignments that you have received?
- _____ Very Well Qualified
- _____ Qualified
- _____ Borderline
- _____ Unqualified
- _____ Very Unqualified
- (25) How would you describe your feelings of accomplishment achieved on the job?
- _____ Very Positive
- _____ Positive
- _____ Borderline
- _____ Negative
- _____ Very Negative

(26) In general, how would you describe the amount of recognition that you have received for special achievement or extra efforts?

_____ Very Adequate

_____ Adequate

_____ Borderline

_____ Inadequate

_____ Very Inadequate

(27) Have you ever experienced a sense of job burnout during your career?

_____ No

_____ Yes

Explain:

(28) In general, how would you rate the overall quality of your superiors?

_____ Exceptionally Good

_____ Somewhat Good

_____ So-so

_____ Somewhat Poor

_____ Exceptionally Poor

(29) How adequate is the degree of freedom that you are given in the performance of your job?

- _____ Very Adequate
- _____ Adequate
- _____ Borderline
- _____ Inadequate
- _____ Very Inadequate

(30) During the normal course of my job I feel restricted by the power of control that others have over me.

- _____ Strongly Agree
- _____ Agree
- _____ Neutral
- _____ Disagree
- _____ Strongly Disagree

(31) Up to this point in time, my career expectations are being fulfilled.

- _____ Strongly Agree
- _____ Agree
- _____ Neutral
- _____ Disagree
- _____ Strongly Disagree

(32) If you so desired, what are your chances of altering your normal career pattern?

_____ Exceptionally Good

_____ Somewhat Good

_____ So-so

_____ Somewhat Poor

_____ Exceptionally Poor

(33) In general, how satisfied are you with your career pattern?

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Borderline

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

(34) Have you been given career counseling?

_____ Yes

_____ No

(35) How satisfied are you with the career guidance that has been given to you?

_____ Very Satisfied

_____ Satisfied

_____ Borderline

_____ Dissatisfied

_____ Very Dissatisfied

(36) Please indicate two factors that you consider most important in achieving career satisfaction.

1.

2.

Feel free to use the remaining space for any other comments you may have. Please return the survey using the pre-addressed envelope.

APPENDIX B

RESULTS FROM THE QUESTIONNAIRE
(N = 164)

Q1: RANK OF RESPONDENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>
(N)	76	53	35
(%)	46.3	32.3	21.3

Q2: AGE OF RESPONDENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>
25-30	43	0	0
31-35	23	30	0
36-40	9	21	14
Over 40	1	2	21

Q3: SEX OF RESPONDENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>
Male	74	52	34
Female	2	2	0

Q4: MARITAL STATUS

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>
Single	17	5	2
Married	56	49	31
Divorced	2	3	2
Other	1	1	0

Q5: TYPE OF UNIT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>
District	23	12	13
Group/Station	6	3	1
Marine Safety	13	7	3
Air Station	16	15	8
Other Ashore	10	12	5
WHEC	1	1	2
WMEC	3	2	2
WLB	3	0	0
Other Afloat	1	1	1

Q6: SATISFACTION WITH PAY LEVEL

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Satisfied	6	7	16	29	17.7
Satisfied	50	38	14	102	62.2
Borderline	16	6	3	25	15.2
Dissatisfied	3	1	1	5	3.0
Very Dissatisfied	1	1	1	3	1.8

Q7: REACTION TOWARD MILITARY RETIREMENT PLAN

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Adequate	15	6	11	32	19.5
Adequate	40	30	21	91	55.5
Borderline	14	12	3	29	17.7
Inadequate	6	5	0	11	6.7
Very Inadequate	1	0	0	1	.6

Q8: RATING OF MILITARY BENEFITS OVERALL

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Adequate	6	0	2	8	4.9
Adequate	40	24	23	87	53.0
Borderline	22	20	7	49	29.9
Inadequate	5	8	3	16	9.8
Very Inadequate	3	1	0	4	2.4

Q9: FEELINGS TOWARD QUICKNESS OF PROMOTION

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Much Too Quickly	0	0	0	0	0
Too Quickly	4	5	4	13	7.9
Just Right	30	37	28	95	57.9
Too Slowly	34	11	3	48	29.3
Much Too Slowly	8	0	0	8	4.9

Q10: REACTION TO SELECTION PROCESS

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u> <u>(%)</u>	
Very Positive	1	2	1	4	2.4
Positive	25	27	16	68	41.5
Borderline	33	13	12	58	35.4
Negative	12	10	3	25	15.2
Very Negative	5	1	3	9	5.5

Q11: EQUITABLE ASSIGNMENT PROCESS IN ALL FIELDS

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u> <u>(%)</u>	
Strongly Agree	0	0	1	1	.6
Agree	7	11	3	21	12.8
Neutral	26	13	13	52	31.7
Disagree	33	24	16	73	44.5
Strongly Disagree	10	5	2	17	10.4

Q12: SATISFACTION WITH GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u> <u>(%)</u>	
Very Satisfied	40	23	24	87	53.0
Satisfied	20	18	9	54	32.9
Borderline	3	8	1	12	7.3
Dissatisfied	5	4	1	10	6.1
Very Dissatisfied	1	0	0	1	.7

Q13: ABILITY TO INCLUENCE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF ASSIGNMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Exceptionally Good	4	9	4	17	10.4
Somewhat Good	23	19	16	58	35.4
So-so	25	8	7	40	24.4
Somewhat Poor	14	8	7	29	17.7
Exceptionally Poor	10	9	1	20	12.2

Q14: ATTITUDE OF FAMILY TOWARD MOVES

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Positive	7	3	3	13	7.9
Positive	19	18	12	49	29.9
Borderline	14	12	7	33	20.1
Negative	14	10	9	33	20.1
Very Negative	5	5	3	13	7.9
Not Applicable	17	5	1	23	14.0

Q15: MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ASSIGNMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Billet Type	20	7	13	40	24.4
Billet Location	15	14	8	37	22.6
Both Important	41	32	14	87	53.0

Q16: ADEQUATE NOTIFICATION OF IMPENDING TRANSFER

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Strongly Agree	8	9	11	28	17.1
Agree	33	25	15	73	44.5
Neutral	7	6	2	15	9.1
Disagree	19	6	5	30	18.3
Strongly Disagree	9	7	2	18	11.0

Q17: QUALITY OF SUBORDINATES

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Exceptionally Good	15	20	22	57	34.8
Somewhat Good	50	27	10	87	53.0
So-so	9	6	3	18	11.0
Somewhat Poor	1	0	0	1	.6
Exceptionally Poor	1	0	0	1	.6

Q18: ATTITUDE OF FAMILY TOWARD CAREER

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Positive	18	14	14	46	28.0
Positive	29	26	16	71	43.3
Borderline	8	6	2	16	9.8
Negative	3	3	1	7	4.3
Very Negative	2	0	0	2	1.2
Not Applicable	16	4	2	22	13.4

Q19: PUBLIC APPRECIATION OF COAST GUARD MISSION

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Strongly Agree	4	9	8	21	12.8
Agree	48	24	14	86	52.4
Neutral	13	10	9	32	19.5
Disagree	10	9	4	23	14.0
Strongly Disagree	1	1	0	2	1.3

Q20: CHALLENGE OF JOB ASSIGNMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Challenging	18	18	12	48	29.3
Challenging	45	32	21	98	59.8
Borderline	11	3	2	16	9.8
Unchallenging	1	0	0	1	.6
Very Unchallenging	1	0	0	1	.6

Q21: TREATMENT RECEIVED FROM DETAILERS

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Exceptionally Good	12	13	7	32	19.5
Somewhat Good	28	18	18	64	39.0
So-so	17	13	7	37	22.6
Somewhat Poor	12	5	2	19	11.6
Exceptionally Poor	7	4	1	12	7.3

Q22: SATISFACTION WITH BILLET ASSIGNMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u> <u>(%)</u>	
Very Satisfied	29	27	20	73	44.5
Satisfied	36	18	14	68	41.5
Borderline	10	6	1	17	10.4
Dissatisfied	4	2	0	6	3.7
Very Dissatisfied	0	0	0	0	0

Q23: INFLUENCE OVER BILLET ASSIGNMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u> <u>(%)</u>	
Exceptionally Good	5	6	7	18	11.0
Somewhat Good	32	25	14	71	43.3
So-so	16	9	9	34	20.7
Somewhat Poor	12	6	4	22	13.4
Exceptionally Poor	11	7	1	19	11.6

Q24: QUALIFICATION FOR BILLET ASSIGNMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u> <u>(%)</u>	
Very Well Qualified	23	32	18	73	44.5
Qualified	47	18	17	82	50.0
Borderline	4	3	0	7	4.3
Unqualified	2	0	0	2	1.2
Very Unqualified	0	0	0	0	0

Q25: FEELINGS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Positive	29	19	17	65	39.6
Positive	36	29	15	80	48.8
Borderline	9	3	3	15	9.1
Negative	2	1	0	3	1.8
Very Negative	0	1	0	1	.6

Q26: AMOUNT OF RECOGNITION RECEIVED

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Adequate	6	6	6	18	11.0
Adequate	32	20	13	65	39.6
Borderline	17	11	9	37	22.6
Inadequate	14	13	4	31	18.9
Very Inadequate	7	3	3	13	7.9

Q27: JOB BURNOUT

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
No	29	22	17	68	41.5
Yes	47	31	18	96	58.5

Q28: QUALITY OF SUPERIORS

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Exceptionally Good	15	7	11	33	20.1
Somewhat Good	33	31	18	82	50.0
So-so	22	7	5	34	20.7
Somewhat Poor	4	7	1	12	7.3
Exceptionally Poor	2	1	0	3	1.8

Q29: DEGREE OF JOB FREEDOM

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Adequate	27	24	23	74	45.1
Adequate	36	24	8	68	41.5
Borderline	10	3	3	16	9.8
Inadequate	3	2	1	6	3.7
Very Inadequate	0	0	0	0	0

Q30: RESTRICTED IN JOB PERFORMANCE

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Strongly Agree	3	3	0	6	3.7
Agree	20	7	5	32	19.5
Neutral	21	11	9	41	25.0
Disagree	29	28	18	75	45.7
Strongly Disagree	3	4	3	10	6.1

Q31: FULFILLMENT OF CAREER EXPECTATIONS

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Strongly Agree	13	9	7	29	17.7
Agree	32	29	23	84	51.2
Neutral	18	5	2	25	15.2
Disagree	11	9	3	23	14.0
Strongly Disagree	2	1	0	3	1.8

Q32: CHANCE OF ALTERING CAREER PATTERN

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Exceptionally Good	2	0	0	2	1.2
Somewhat Good	14	17	11	42	25.6
So-so	24	13	7	44	26.8
Somewhat Poor	28	15	9	52	31.7
Exceptionally Poor	8	8	8	24	14.6

Q33: SATISFACTION WITH CAREER PATTERN

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N) (%)</u>	
Very Satisfied	16	18	14	48	29.3
Satisfied	34	27	17	78	47.6
Borderline	17	4	4	25	15.2
Dissatisfied	8	3	0	11	6.7
Very Dissatisfied	1	1	0	2	1.2

Q34: HAVE YOU BEEN GIVEN CAREER COUNSELING?

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u>	<u>(%)</u>
Yes	27	17	5	49	29.9
No	49	36	30	115	70.1

Q35: SATISFACTION WITH CAREER GUIDANCE

	<u>LT</u>	<u>LCDR</u>	<u>CDR</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>(N)</u>	<u>(%)</u>
Very Satisfied	2	4	0	6	3.7
Satisfied	18	10	5	33	20.1
Borderline	21	20	12	53	32.3
Dissatisfied	17	10	8	35	21.3
Very Dissatisfied	18	9	10	37	22.6

APPENDIX C

FACTORS IDENTIFIED IN ACHIEVING CAREER SATISFACTION (RANKED IN DESCENDING ORDER)

Recognition

Challenging Job

Job Location

Sense of Accomplishment

Meaningful Job

Promotion

Good Leadership and Effective Superiors

Job Freedom

Family Happiness

Pay

Stabile Career Pattern

Job Type

Job Responsibility

Meeting Individual Potential

More Predictable Transfer System

Advanced Training/Education

Better OPMS

Enhancing Coast Guard

Personal Interaction With Others

Guiding Subordinates

Better Detailer Treatment

Flexibility in Assignments

Job Productivity

Job Security

Working in a "Fun" Job

Better Career Development Planning

Good Working Conditions

Job Continuity

Meeting Career Goals

System Based on Performance not Seniority

Stability in Benefits, Retirement

Command Support

High Quality of Personnel

Stable Coast Guard Programs

Learning From Others

APPENDIX D

RANKING OF QUESTIONS BY POSITIVE RESPONSE

<u>FACTOR</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
Qualification for Billet Assignment -----	94.5
Challenging Job -----	89.1
Feelings of Accomplishment -----	88.4
Degree of Job Freedom -----	86.6
Satisfaction with Billet Assignment -----	86.0
Satisfaction with Geographic Location -----	85.9
Pay Level -----	79.9
Satisfaction with Career Pattern -----	76.9
Retirement -----	75.0
Attitude of Family Toward Coast Guard -----	71.3
Quality of Subordinates -----	70.7
Quality of Superiors -----	70.1
Fulfillment of Career Expectations -----	68.9
Quickness of Promotion -----	65.8
Public Appreciation of Coast Guard -----	65.2
Adequate Notification of Transfer -----	61.6
Treatment Received from Detailers -----	58.5
Benefits Overall -----	57.9
Influence Over Billet Assignment -----	54.3
Restricted in Job Performance -----	51.8
Amount of Recognition Received -----	50.6

Ability to Influence Area -----	45.8
Reaction to Selection Process -----	43.9
Job Burnout -----	41.5
Attitude of Family Toward Moves -----	37.8
Career Counseling Given -----	29.9
Chance of Altering Career Pattern -----	26.8
Satisfaction With Career Guidance -----	23.8
Equitable Assignment Process -----	13.4

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12. Commanding Officer 1
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14. Commanding Officer 1
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15. Commanding Officer 1
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16. Commanding Officer 1
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17. Commanding Officer 1
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18. LCDR Phil Sherer 1
Commandant (G-PO)
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